

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Town of Grafton**  
30 Providence Road  
Grafton, MA 01519  
(508) 839-5335 x 1167  
[www.grafton-ma.gov](http://www.grafton-ma.gov)

2022 JAN 31 AM 8:44

RECEIVED TOWN CLERK  
GRAFTON MA

Finance Committee public meeting of Wednesday, November 17, 2021 Minutes approved on Wednesday, January 19, 2022

**Finance Committee**  
**Public Meeting**  
**Wednesday, November 17, 2021**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
**Conference Room A OR**  
**Zoom webinar.**  
**Webinar ID: 812 2488 1855**  
**Passcode: 026304**  
**Minutes**

**Public Meeting**

The Public Meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by Chair Mark W. Haddad at 7:00 P.M. live in Conference Room A and via Zoom Webinar.

**Finance Committee**

Present: Mark W. Haddad, Irene Houle, Dan Cusher, Angelina Correia (Present via Zoom), Heather McCue (Present via Zoom), Sue Robbins, Gopal Shenoy (Present via Zoom), Barry Smith.

Absent: Andy Jefferson.

Others present: Town Administrator Evan Brassard, Finance Director Mary Lauria.

**Update on the progress to interview Finance Committee Assistant/AHT Assistant**

Town Administrator Evan Brassard provided the update:

Several applicants applied

Only one applicant qualified for the interviewing process

The applicant became unavailable for the interview

The process of re-advertising for the position will take place

Town Administrator will keep Finance Committee updated on the progress.

**Discussion of the preparation of the Recommendations of the Finance Committee for Town Meeting Warrant articles****Discussion topics:**

- The general consensus is that Finance Committee members are not completely satisfied with the process of having William Blake, Communication Specialist and Management Analyst prepare the recommendations of the Finance Committee for them.
- The preparation of each recommendation needs to provide the readers with the impact of the articles and provide the why for the article.
- Finance Committee needs to make an explicit statement providing why the Finance Committee is for or against the article.

- Finance Committee appreciates the time and energy of the new administration to prepare the document of the Warrant Articles with Finance Committee Recommendations.
- Finance Committee wants to return to the traditional way of Finance Committee of discussing the article and writing the recommendation.
- The printing and document preparation by the Administration will continue following Finance Committee composition and approval of the Recommendations.

#### **Transfer from the Reserve Fund FY22**

Town Administrator Evan Brassard reviewed the Transfer Request from the Reserve Fund in the amount of \$7,000.00 for the Municipal Building Maintenance Account:

- The Town received funds from the State Budget earmarked for Municipal upgrades in the amount of \$25,000.00
- These funds will be expended for a Customer Service Window that will be added to the Building Department to make this department's service ADA compliant in the amount of \$32,000.00.
- Town Administrator Evan Brassard continued to explain that the additional \$7,000.00 funds were available in the Municipal Maintenance budget, however, the hotwater heater in the Municipal Center unexpectedly needs to be replaced and will expend those available funds plus.

Motion: Irene Houle moved that the Finance Committee approve the transfer from the Reserve Fund to the Municipal Building Maintenance Account to complete the Custom Service Window at the Building Department.

Seconded: Barry Smith. All in favor. Motion carries.

Roll Call Vote:

Aye: Mark W. Haddad, Irene Houle, Dan Cusher, Angelina Correia, Heather McCue, Sue Robbins, Gopal Shenoy, Barry.

Nay; None

The Transfer Request from the Reserve Fund for this transaction was signed by Chair Mark W. Haddad and handed to Town Administrator Evan Brassard.

Finance Committee Administrative Assistant will request a signed copy for Finance Committee's records from Accounting for Finance Committee records.

#### **FY23 Proposed Budget:**

##### **FY23 Proposed Budget of the Finance Committee**

Administrative Assistant Susan Fiacco presented a FY22 scenario of the proposed budget of the Finance Committee for Committee review.

##### **Discussion Topics:**

The Administrative Assistant position will be split with the Affordable Housing Trust.

- The scenario presented has Finance Committee carrying the entire budget at 14 hours for Finance Committee and 5 hours for Affordable Housing Trust per week on average.
- Town Administrator Evan Brassard stated that he considers the position to be a 50-50 split for both committees.

- Finance Committee member Sue Robbins voiced her concern relative to the busy times of the fiscal year that demands additional hours to complete the Finance Committee's work.  
Finance Committee Chair Mark W. Haddad stated that we will see how it works and if the budget needs adjusting in the future, it will need to be done.
- The position was redirected to be budgeted at 9.5 hours per week for the Finance Committee Administrative Assistant for FY23.
- The position of Administrative Assistant will be discussed and planned with Affordable Housing Trust to be budgeted at 9.5 hours per week for FY23.
- This position will be redirected as an inhouse part time position without benefits or overtime with a pay of \$22.00 per hour for FY23.
- The position was explained that the hours needed for the Committee and the Trust will be based on work load throughout the fiscal year.
- Finance Committee member Dan Cusher noted that 5 of the 7 members on the Affordable Housing Trust have served on Finance Committee and are aware of the hours needed per fiscal year.
- The position for Finance Committee will no longer need reimbursement for internet use since this will be an inhouse position.
- Extra hours dedicated to Printing and Document preparation and Precinct posting will no longer be needed since this will be an inhouse process with William Blake assisting.
- Currently the Affordable Housing Trust does not have an Administrative Assistant. Support had come from the Planning Department and in particular from the former position of Assistant Town Planner.
- Vote:  
Motion: Dan Cusher moved that the Finance Committee approve their proposed Finance Committee FY23 budget in the total amount of \$15,141.00. \$10,868.00 for the Administrative Assistant's Salary and \$4,273.00 for Expenses.  
Seconded: Irene Houle.  
All in favor. Motion carries.  
Roll Call Vote: Aye: Mark W. Haddad, Irene Houle, Dan Cusher, Angelina Correia, Heather McCue, Sue Robbins, Gopal Shenoy, Barry Smith.  
Nay: None

**Further Discussion topic:**

Finance Committee member Barry Smith brought up the topic of having the Finance Committee document of Warrant Articles with Finance Committee Recommendations for each Town Meeting, mailed to Town residents.

Cost effectively, Town Administrator Evan Brassard suggested using the Code Red communication method to email or text the attached document for all Town residents(households).

**Review of the figures for the Reserve Fund FY23 Proposed Budget**

Motion: Sue Robbins moved that the Finance Committee approve the proposed FY23 budget of the Reserve Fund in the amount of \$75,000.00

Seconded: Irene Houle. All in favor. Motion carries.

Roll Call Vote:

Aye: Mark W. Haddad, Irene Houle, Dan Cushner, Angelina Correia, Heather McCue, Sue Robbins, Gopal Shenoy, Barry Smith.

Nay: None

**Discussion Topics with the Town Administrator Evan Brassard and Finance Director Mary Lauria:**

FY23 revenue projections

**Projections for FY23**

Finance Director Mary Lauria discussed the fiscal year projections with Finance Committee. FY22 had been level funded

It is anticipated that FY23 will be a level funded budget as well.

It is too early review the Cherry Sheet from the State.

The projection is \$1,718,000.00 which is a 2-2.5% increase or \$35,000- \$50,000.00 increase from FY22 to FY23.

Debt Exclusion \$3,608,232.00

Debt \$42,069.00

ClearGov is a work in progress in preparing Revenue and Expense.

Estimated Receipts will definitely be a 2% increase

Auto Excise will be estimated as a littler higher for FY23 from FY22.

**FY23 budget priorities**

Town Administrator Evan Brassard:

FY23 1 officer increase for the Police Department \$100,000.000

Would like to see 5 positions added to the Police Department n 5 years.

And would like to see an overall growth of 30 Police Officers for the Police Department.

Discussion topics:

- Consideration for the additional officer to have social work experience?
- 3 police officers on the road would be helpful
- 3 female officers are on Grafton's force to date
- 30 officers on the road is sufficient for a population of 25,000
- Consideration for Domestic Violence preventative measures- a good topic to review with the Chief.

Department budgets are to be submitted to ClearGov by 12/17/2021.

Finance Director Mary Lauria will send the current Motor Vehicle Excise Tax and the Meals Tax to Finance Committee.

Marijuana Dispensary will be paying the Town its amount due on a quarterly basis.

School Choice/Charter Schools Chapter 70 funds increase then Assessments increase.

**Process of reviewing FY23 budgets through ClearGov:**

**FY23 Departmental Budget Reviews**

- December 17, 2021 all departments will have their budget on ClearGov
- Mary and Evan will be working on ClearGov- Finance Committee will be able to watch in real time as the number are adjusted.
- A full review will be ready in January 2022

- 11/30/2021 the Preliminary School Budget will be presented.
- Mid- January the Town Administrator will be working with the Staff in a cooperative manner with Team building and lunch.
- Finance Committee member Sue Robbins stated that she appreciates the level of communication.

The Formal presentation of the proposed budget will be a joint meeting with the Select Board and should be on or about February 02, 2022. The Town Administrator will keep us informed as to when the Formal presentation will take place noting that a Legal Notice needs to be published for Finance Committee since the proposed budget presentation is a required Public Hearing of the Finance Committee.

#### **Finance Committee Resignation**

- Vice Chair Irene Houle has stated that she will be resigning as a member of the Finance Committee effective November 18, 2021 due to her new employment position that will demand more of her time. Irene will submit her resignation formally at that time.
- Chair Mark W. Haddad thanked Irene for her time and dedication as she served the Town well.
- Chair Mark W. Haddad asked Town Administrator about the process to appoint Finance Committee members and if he had an update of the approval of the 3 person appointing committee by the State.
- The Town Administrator stated that the Finance Committee vacancy will be posted ASAP and that he will check the status of the Appointment Committee from the State.

#### **Review/discussion of the upcoming meeting schedule of the Finance Committee**

- **TBD**  
The presentation of the proposed budget for FY23 by the Town Administrator should be on or about February 02, 2022, however, as the budget process develops, the Town Administrator will advise of the Joint meeting presentation date to the Select Board and Finance Committee.
- **Finance Committee member's review of budgets with individual Department Heads**  
These appointments will take place following the formal presentation of the proposed FY23 budget by the Town Administrator and the public meetings of Department reviews in March, 2022.
- **Schedule of Meeting dates for Finance Committee's Department budget reviews**  
Saturday, March 05, 2022  
Wednesday, March 09, 2022  
Saturday, March 12, 2022  
Wednesday, March 16, 2022  
Saturday, March 19, 2022  
**Plan for the assignment of Finance Committee members for review of Departments' proposed budgets for FY23**

**With the departure of Irene Houle as member of the Finance Committee, the following Departments will be reassigned to the following Finance Committee members:**

Conservation Dan Cusher

Library Barry Smith

Mark Haddad offered to review the following Department with new member Angelina Correia:

Town Administrator review of Departments under his supervision.

Police

Treasurer/Collector

Town Clerk/Elections

School

Sue Robbins offered to review the following Departments:

Fire

Sewer

DPW

Council on Aging

Town Planner

Gopal Shenoy offered to review:

EDC

The list of Finance Committee members assigned to Departments for budget review will be updated and the Schedule of dates will sent out to all Finance Committee members for their review.

The information will be sent out to all Departments once the information is confirmed.

### **Town Report**

### **Review of the Draft of the Finance Committee's portion of the Annual Town Report due In January 2022**

#### **Town Report**

Dan Cusher provided Finance Committee with a Draft version of the Finance Committee's portion of the annual Town Report that is due to submit by January of 2022. Administrative Assistant Susan Fiocco provided Finance Committee with the figures .

Motion: Sue Robbins moved that the Finance Committee approve the Finance Committee portion of the Town Report as slightly amended by grammar and not content.

Seconded: Irene Houle. All in favor. Motion Carries.

Roll Call Vote:

Aye: Mark W. Haddad, Irene Houle. Dan Cusher, Angelina Correia, Heather McCue, Sue Robbins, Gopal Shenoy, Barry Smith.

Nay: none.

### **Outstanding Minutes:**

**Monday, October 18, 2021**

#### **Minutes for approval**

Motion: Sue Robbins moved that the Finance Committee approve the minutes of Monday, October 18, 2021 as presented.

Seconded: Barry Smith. All in favor. Motion carries.

Roll Call Vote:

Aye: Mark W. Haddad, Irene Houle. Dan Cusher, Angelina Correia, Heather McCue, Sue Robbins, Gopal Shenoy, Barry Smith.

Nay: none.

### **Outstanding Bills**

#### **Internet Reimbursement Bill for Approval**

Motion: Barry Smith moved that Finance Committee approve payment of the bill in the amount of \$63.00 for Internet Reimbursement to Administrative Assistant Susan Fiocco for the months of September, October and November, 2021.

Seconded: Sue Robbins.

All in favor. Motion carries.

Roll Call Vote:

Aye: Mark W. Haddad, Irene Houle. Dan Cusher, Angelina Correia, Heather McCue, Sue Robbins, Gopal Shenoy, Barry Smith.

Nay: none.

#### **Updates of the following Committees attended by Finance Committee members:**

Attendees

#### **Association of Town Finance Committee Annual Meeting Feedback**

The segments of the Annual meeting were held via Zoom Webinars.

Sue Robbins stated that the 1<sup>st</sup> segment was excellent.

Sue Robbins noted that the American Rescue Plan Act was discussed and asked the Town Administrator about the status of Grafton's funds that have been received.

Heather McCue

#### **American Rescue Plan Act Committee**

Heather McCue updated the Finance Committees

The Town of Grafton has received \$2.2 million to date.

A final amount of the approximate amount of \$5.5 million will be arriving to Grafton sometime next summer.

The funds have several categories that the money can be used for.

All Department Heads have been asked to submit a request.

A consultant will be hired to vet the projects to ensure that the steps in the process are all covered.

To date: no input from Fire

Input is needed from the Water Districts

Lots of EDC strategies have been submitted

Mark W. Haddad /Barry Smith/Angelina Correia

#### **Grafton Sustainability Committee**

This Committee was not reviewed.

Mark W. Haddad/Barry Smith

#### **Select Board**

This Committee was not reviewed.



Irene Houle

**Library Building and Planning Committee**

Irene Houle stated that the Adult Rooms and the Children's Rooms at the Library will be used well.

The Committee will meet review the punch list and the contingency list of the Library Building and Planning Committee before it is disbanded.

Chair Mark W. Haddad thanked Irene for a job well done.

Irene's departure from Finance Committee creates a vacancy as Finance Committee's representative on The Library Building and Planning Committee.

**Library Building and Planning Committee**

Motion: Mark W. Haddad moved that the Finance Committee appoint Andy Jefferson to replace Irene Houle on this committee as Finance Committee representative.

Seconded: Sue Robbins. All in favor. Motion carries.

Roll Call Vote:

Aye: Mark W. Haddad, Irene Houle, Dan Cusher, Angelina Correia, Heather McCue, Sue Robbins, Gopal Shenoy, Barry Smith.

Nay: none.

Administrative Assistant Susan Fiocco will contact Andy to see if he is willing to take on this position.

Sue Robbins

**School Committee**

The Preliminary budget for FY23 will be presented on November 30, 2021.

Gopal Shenoy

**Economic Development Commission**

Gopal Shenoy updated the committee with the Celebrate Grafton coming up once again this year.

Friday and Saturday in May, 2022 will be another celebration and will include restaurants

Marketing Media will be reviewing properties.

Sue Robbins encourage everyone to attend the Grand Opening of the Library on Friday, December 17, 2021.

Sue Robbins

**Capital Improvement Committee**

A meeting of the CIPC will be coming up soon.

The Capital Plan has been submitted for FY23 and the Town Administrator is currently reviewing the list of projects and budget.

Sue Robbins

**DPW Building Committee**

The Committee has not disbanded to date ]

**Adjournment**

Finance Committee Chair Mark W. Haddad adjourned the public meeting of the Finance Committee at 8:27 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Fiocco